



Ars longa  
Vita brevis



Ward Swinhart

1941-2024

Bamboo

Blackletter

Sastille Day, 2012  
14.VII.2012

San Francisco Public Library  
Ward Dunham & Linnea Rundquist  
www.AtelierGargoyle.com

Basic Strokes

Sastard

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz.

This is being written very quickly  
with a Brause 2 mm Nib...  
because Miss Linnea is anxious  
to get out of the house! She's  
got places to go and people to  
see... and I, as usual, am too  
slow, holding this important  
personage back from her ap-  
pointments and tasks!

VI.2009

Who is it that says most? Which can say more  
Than this rich praise: **that you alone are you?**  
In whose confine immured is the store

(SHAKESPEARE · SONNET 84)

The Spirit of the Gothic Scribe



## THE MONK & THE DRUNK

THE MONK AND the drunk" was how Aimee Michaels described our teaching partnership. We had fun sharing our love of blackletter around the States and in the UK. But you had to be careful with Ward. In one workshop I foolishly said to the class that we all had instinctive reactions, and that I would demonstrate by punching Ward in the stomach. "Don't do that," he warned, but I did, and, within a fraction of a second, my view of the class rotated 90 degrees, and I found myself in a heap against the wall on the opposite side of the room.

He was, of course, terrific in a crisis. In the same class we heard a scream coming from the women's toilets. He was in there in seconds, pulling out a shocked student with her hand in the air, holding the top of her finger expertly in place after it had been guillotined by a faulty metal door... and then, off to the emergency room with her. Since I faint at the sight of blood, I was lucky he was there—and so was she.

When that same class came to an end, Ward offered to protect me as I went down under one of the bridges on the East River side of New York City to board a friend's yacht from a ruined pier. However, a strong tide was against us, and the landing would not work. Ward and I went off to dinner and then down to the dock below the Twin Towers. Docking there costs an enormous amount and has to be prebooked, so the plan was that the boat would come in close in the dark without stopping, and Ward would then physically throw me onto it, which he did. We sailed off and moored under the Statue of Liberty for the night. I think you can see that, as a friend, he was absolutely dependable, a man I literally trusted with my life.

I introduced Ward to my family. He had my 14-year-old nephew's eyes on stalks once, when at the Lethbridge [Alberta, Canada] conference, Ward came out to my sister's farm for the evening, and Josh asked him what he was going to do when the conference ended. With a wicked smile he instantly responded, "Find myself some downtown toilet and drink myself into the comfort zone." Next year my nephew sent him a calendar he had found: "Toilets of Alberta."

As a teacher Ward was also an action man. An amazing demonstrator rather than a theorizer, he would do it with infinite patience for every student. He loved to write, but his teaching methods weren't always orthodox. At one of the St. John's conferences, our classrooms were next door to each other. He had become irritated by the "weak and feeble" letters people were

producing. After lunch I saw him coming down the corridor wearing a full medieval jousting helmet with narrow eye slits and breathing holes. He walked into the classroom to gasps and then took it off and slammed it down on the desk, pointed at it, and said, "THAT'S GOTHIC!"

I treasure the postcards he sent, the fact that my *The Golden Thread* became one of his backpack books, the pens he made me, the many memories I have, and the huge smile that lights me up when I think of him. I am lucky to be reminded of him every day by his blue screaming eagle that hangs in my studio, a strident plea for the bird's protection [see the back cover of *Alphabet*, Vol. 46, No. 1, Spring 2021]. Most of all I am grateful for his friendship. One of the joys of being with him can be seen in his calligraphy. He had a decisive pen stroke— one of clear conviction seized in the moment, and relished. My gratitude and warmth extends also to Linnea who loved him, thrilled him, and, as much as anyone could, kept him firmly in hand. ♡





LINNEA LUNDAQUIST

ON THE DAY that I'm writing this, it has been 252 days since Ward stopped breathing at 6:40 p.m. on Saturday, August 24,

2024. It was a beautiful summer afternoon. I was holding his hand. Our dog McNeill was on the bed beside us, and my brother Peter was nearby. Family members and friends had left a few hours earlier after saying last good-byes. The sun was sinking in the sky. Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons* was playing in the background. He did not see the sun set into the ocean that evening, as we had done together so many times before, but perhaps his spirit felt the beauty of the end of that summer day. How could My Man, my beautiful beloved Man, be dead? How could his robust body be so still and silent? I'm still in a state of shock and disbelief—because all around me, in our home in Half Moon Bay, the air still vibrates with his essence. He talks to me—day & night—through his Calligraphy, mostly—but also through his postcards and his books and his clothing and his rings and his necklaces and his artwork and his backpacks and his mugs and his fountain pens and his seals & sealing wax and his bamboo pens and his brushes and his “Yes!” paste and his knives and his swords and his coffee cups and his US Army silverware and his Enrico's matches and his huge Enrico's bronze teapot and his berets and his survival gear and his camp stoves and his fire-starting tools and his linen

napkins and his Viking sculpture replicas and his overflowing flat files and his Mardi Gras beads and his rusty iron barbells and his steel-tubing drinking straws and his medieval helmets and his medieval weapons and his Darth Vader mask and his walking sticks (that doubled as weapons if necessary) and his photographs of his children and his urn of his mother's ashes and his Special Forces paraphernalia and his ancient coins and

his big heavy boots and his slingshots and his first-aid kits and his handmade paper stash and his Cambodian Buddhist temple bell and his leather pouches and his ink-grinding stones and his Chinese ink sticks and his soup-tureen-sized mortar & pestle for grinding gum sandarac and his dozens of toothbrushes and his stolen man-hole covers and his constant correspondence and his sewing projects and his paisley fabric

and his favorite beads strung on multicolored paracord and his cutting boards and his camouflage-patterned handkerchiefs and his shot glasses from bars around the world and his steins & flacons & chalices and his grocery lists and his sketches and his doodles and his ammo boxes full of his postcard diary and his Manor House Lockbox that weighs a ton and his drawing table stained with vermilion ink and his Pens and his Pens and

his Pens! And his exclamation marks! The exclamation marks are everywhere!!! He was a man of Great Excess and Exuberance for so many Things and People and Animals and Trees and Weather and Food and Letters—and, well, LIFE!!! What a man he was. How lucky I was to have had 38 years with him—and all the laughter, the stories, the exclamation marks, the calligraphy, the storytelling. What a man—“My Man” was the way I referred to him instead of “my husband,” because, he said, that word scared him. He called me “The Dwarf” and I called him “Beastie.” What brought us together was calligraphy, and what kept us together was calligraphy and type and letterforms and laughter and good talk. He was one of a kind, and so it was his calligraphic style—he speaks to me now through his joyous letterforms that vibrate with his life force. And I cannot help but smile through my tears when I look at or touch his Calligraphy. I thank all of You for being in his life and loving him, and for sending such kind and heart-felt stories and photos and memories. Ward Dunham—he was truly A Man of Letters. ♪

# “Black Sabbath”

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linnea.com

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